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THE

Drama of Drunkenness;

OR,

SIXTEEN SCENES IN THE DRUNKARD'S THEATRE.

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AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION:
1122 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA.
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PREFACE.

THE design of this little volume is to make correct impressions upon the minds of children respecting the great subject of Intemperance. Though not intended as the detail of any particular incidents, it is, nevertheless, a correct picture of scenes that actually occur, almost every day, in all our towns and villages. All the narrative scenes contain a correct statement of FACTS, collected from authentic sources and related without intentional exaggeration. And, it is presumed, if the deeds of Intemperance, but for a single day, were fully exposed to public view, facts more appalling than these would stare us in the face in every direction.

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GIN
WHISKEY

Scene I.

When and Where the Drama Opens.

"There is surely no harm in just taking a social glass with a friend. Who ever heard of a glass of wine or brandy-and-water hurting anybody?" This is often said when people are urged to abstain from tasting of intoxicating drinks. And, if that one social glass were all, it would not be a matter of so much consequence. But if it is only the first of a long succession of glasses. If the taking it is the first step in a path that has led hundreds, and thousands, and hundreds of thousands, to a drunkard's grave,—is there not some reason for bidding one to beware how he forms a taste for the fiery liquid? Is not the risk great enough to make such a warning seasonable?

BRANDY

Scene II.

The Friendly Meeting.

The one glass has already grown to half a dozen. The two companions are now in a drinking-saloon,—with a plentiful supply of the intoxicating drink. Comfortably seated, they indulge themselves in friendly chat, drinking glass after glass, till they become excited. The hours of the evening pass rapidly away. Soon midnight comes, —too soon for the full indulgence of their appetites. Little do they think of eyes that are kept waking at home, or of the injury they do to health and business and character. But the next day their red eyes and haggard countenances tell us that "they tarried long at the wine." Would it not have been better to have let the first glass alone?

GIN
RUM

Scene III.

The Lonely Wife and Mother.

This scene represents the drunkard's wife in the loneliness of her home. Her husband is a tailor, and has promised to have a piece of work done by an early hour the next morning for a customer who was leaving town. Her husband was coaxed away from his work; and the poor wife, to save his credit and custom, and to provide bread for her four little ones, who are fast asleep in the same room, takes the hours which she needs for sleep and gives them to work. Cruel husband and father! And more cruel they who call him from his work and put the cup of intoxication to his lips!

GIN
WHISKEY

Scene IV.

The Drunkard's Company.

Yes; this is the drunkard's company! Who would believe that a being formed in the image of God and gifted with understanding would reduce himself to a condition below the brutes? And yet here it is done. This man had a good trade and was doing well; but in an evil hour he was persuaded to go to the tavern, and then to drink, and then to go again and drink again! Then his custom began to fall off. He neglected his family and spent his earnings in the company of sots and idlers. He has now been from home several days; and his wife and children, whom he should protect and provide for, are left to want and misery.

Scene V.

The Drunkard at Home.

Here we see the poor wretch, who has made himself mad with strong drink, abusing his wife and family. It was in vain that she deprived herself of sleep in order to finish the job for his customer. It was in vain that she toiled and suffered day after day to get bread for her children. He comes home in a fury of passion and begins at once to abuse the wife whom he once promised to love and cherish. He does not heed her cries for pity, but makes her leave her home in the dark and dreary night and flee for her life to the neighbours. He has taken a thief into his mouth who has stolen his brains and turned him into a cruel monster. This is the work of strong drink!

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Scene VI.

The Drunkard Returned to his Cups.

Who ever had a harder master than he who is a slave to strong drink? He sees that his business is leaving him. He knows that his wife and children are suffering from want and disgrace. He feels that such habits if continued will destroy his health and his life; and he resolves that he will never drink a drop of intoxicating liquor again. But when some of his old tavern-comrades ask him to take a drink, or when he goes by the place where he has been accustomed to indulge his beastly appetite, the temptation is too strong. We soon see him in the midst of his base and wretched companions, guzzling down the fiery liquid till he is again a fool and a madman.

GIN
WHISKEY

Scene VII.

The Drunkard in the Highway.

With a reeling brain and staggering steps, the miserable slave of strong drink turns his feet homewards. A companion in folly and sin accompanies him; but they are both helpless. They have drunk deep of the intoxicating cup, and their limbs are no longer under their control. One catches by any thing that comes in his way to save himself from a fall; but the other is as helpless as a log. What a picture of a brutish man! He has fallen just in the edge of a pond of muddy water in which the hogs are accustomed to wallow. But they would turn away from the liquor which he loves and by the use of which he has sunk himself below their level.

Scene VIII.

The House Plague.

There is nothing which will sooner turn a happy home into a scene of disorder and misery than strong drink. If the husband and father becomes a drunkard, poverty and suffering are almost sure to come upon the wife and children. But if both father and mother become slaves to the intoxicating cup, as in the scene before us, the house is very likely to become the abode of discord and cruelty. Those who should love and respect each other are filled with anger and violence. Ofttimes a dreadful murder is the fruit of such a quarrel; and the result of a single blow may be a life of suffering and disgrace. What a slayer of human life and peace is strong drink!

GIN
RUM
WHISKY
WINE

Scene IX.

The Drunkard's Perils.

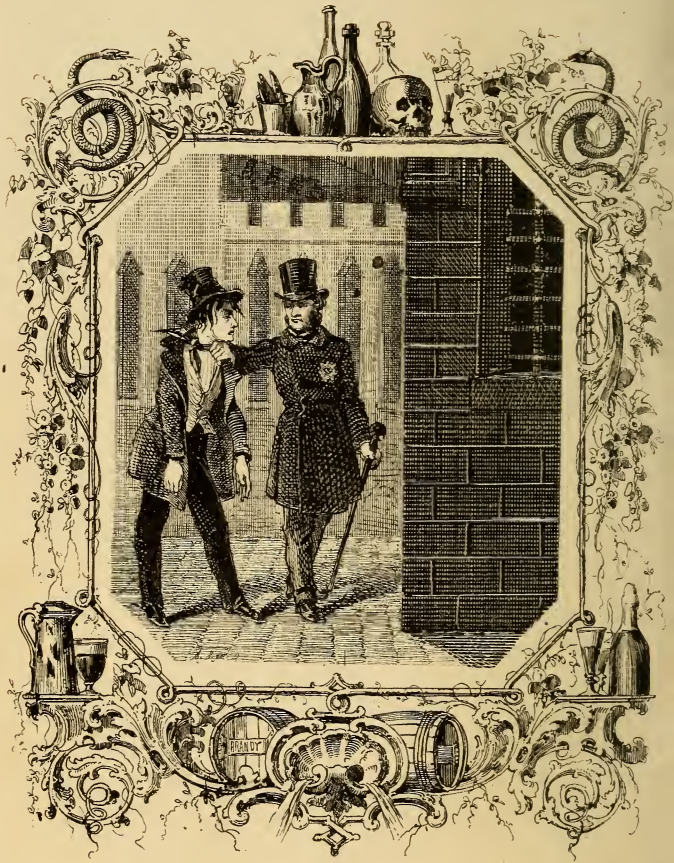
Our reason and senses are given us for our protection as well as for our enjoyment and improvement. If a man puts out his eyes, he has nobody but himself to blame if he fall in the ditch or over the precipice or dam. In attempting to reach something, this woman fell with her head towards the blazing fire. The flame catches her clothes. She is too helpless to protect herself. Her husband is stupidly drunk in bed. The flames spread from her clothes to other things. The house is soon filled with suffocating smoke. The fire soon breaks out; the alarm is raised; and, when the ruins are examined, nothing is seen of the wretched pair but their charred bones!

WHISKEY

Scene X.

The Drunkard involves Others in Trouble.

When he began his course of folly and sin, his children were young; but now his eldest boy goes to school. He is often laughed at and twitted because of his father's habits; but he does not fly into a passion. At home he is very useful in helping his mother, and tries to do things which his father ought to be there to do. He was helping his mother move a heavy tub of water, when his foot slipped, and the whole weight of the tub came down upon his leg, and broke it very badly. He was removed to the hospital, where he was obliged to have his leg taken off, and his poor mother had not only to see him suffer, but was deprived of his help. Oh the woes which strong drink brings in its train!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Scene XI.

One of the Fruits of a "Spree."

This young man was fond of a social glass. He had jovial companions, who would have thought him mean to have refused to drink. So he indulges himself in a glass or two, and perhaps thinks he can break off when he will. He is out on business, and, though warned of his danger, he drinks too freely. He does not mean to unfit himself for what he has to do, but he is already too far gone to judge. Why does the man sell him any more? Why does he not send for some one to take the miserable creature home instead of supplying him with more of the fiery liquid? Does he not know that the few pennies he gets may cost the man his life?

GIN
GIN
WHISKY
WHISKY

Scene XII.

The Catastrophe.

With a foolhardiness which is often seen in drunkards, the slave of the intoxicating glass sets out for home. His brain is heated; his eyes are dim; and he has only just power enough to get into the carriage. Some horses will take a drunken master home in safety; but this is a fractious creature. In descending a steep hill, at the foot of which is a precipice, the horse is frightened. With a sudden leap he frees himself from the carriage and harness and pitches the stupid, helpless driver headlong to the road-side. He falls heavily on a ledge of rocks, and is picked up all-but dead. Does he now put away strong drink? We shall see.

Scene XIII.

The Drunkard in New Perils.

When the drunkard is in liquor he has no control of himself. He has blinded his own eyes, and sees nothing in its true light. He does not know places of safety from places of danger. When sober, he was so much of a sailor that he was intrusted with the care of a vessel; but he could not restrain his love of strong drink, and once he steered his vessel wrong and ran upon the breakers, dashing her in pieces, and exposing the men who were with him to a dreadful death. But they were able to get ashore, and, climbing the rocks, to escape to a place of safety. Surely he has learned a lesson now that he will not soon forget!

BRANDY

Scene XIV.

The Drunkard in New Troubles.

In one of his drunken frolics (as he calls them) the miserable toper fell to quarrelling with another man, more drunk than himself. In the excitement of passion, and influenced with strong drink, he kicked him in the breast and then pitched him out upon the stone step of the door. He fell upon his head and never spoke again! The dead man was taken to his wretched home. And what became of the drunkard? He was arrested and brought before the court, and tried for his dreadful crime. The judge said that his crime was doubled by his being drunk; and, though he did not mean to kill the man, he must go to prison.

Scene XV.

The Drunkard in Prison.

And here he is on his way to the cold and cheerless cell of a prison. He feels bad enough now, and wishes he had never tasted of the fiery liquid. But he was told what would be the end. He saw others who indulged their beastly appetites were constantly falling into dangers and disgrace. His wife and children often begged him, with tears, to abstain, and not to go to the places where liquor was sold and where drinking-people met. But he would not listen to them. He had become the slave of the intoxicating cup; and it has proved a very hard and cruel master. He must now take his place among thieves and robbers. Perhaps he will come to his senses.

Scene XVI.

The Drunkard's Retreat.

Upon the drunkard poverty comes like an armed man. Nothing will save him from rags and want but to leave his cups; and, alas! he is too much of a slave to them to break off a daily resort to the tavern or groggeries where they may be had. He has been released from prison; and, so long as he has a few pennies or can get a little credit, he continues to indulge his beastly appetite. But by-and-by both money and credit fail. He begs his bread from door to door, and is often without a place to sleep in. By want and exposure he becomes sick and lame and helpless, and his next remove is to the public poorhouse. He creeps out now and then; and here we see him, a poor despised outcast, sitting by the wayside.

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